


# Updated guidance regarding the Mental Health Tribunal process

## Background:

The Mental Health Tribunal will be conducting all hearings by video conference from 8 June 2020. The Trust IT department has reviewed the technical specifications required to ensure we are compliant, and has confirmed that the Microsoft Edge

browser  should be used to access the video conference. If you do not have this downloaded onto your computer, please contact the IT help desk to ask colleagues to download it for you.

## MHT venues and attendance:

**Inpatients:** the Mental Health Act Administrator will book a room which can be used for inpatient hearings. Social distancing must be in force at all times. Nursing staff are required to accompany patients who wish to attend their hearing and ensure they can access the video conference. The RC, CPN/AMHP and solicitor can choose whether to attend the hearing in person or access it from another venue such as their office or home, but will need to ensure they are able to access the video conference.

**Community patients:** a suitable venue will need to be arranged by the clinical team or support staff, for example, the team base or residential home, and social distancing must be in place at all times. CPNs are required to accompany patients who wish to attend their hearing and ensure they can access the video conference. The RC and solicitor can choose whether to attend the hearing in person or access it from another venue such as their office or home, but will need to ensure they are able to access the video conference.

**All participants** should ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times and must ensure they are not disturbed during the proceedings.

## Summary:

- All MHTs will be held by video conference effective from 8 June 2020
- Access to a computer, laptop or tablet will be required
- Internet access and Microsoft Edge browser will be required
- The legal representative, RC, CPN, AMHP can attend in person or use video conferencing facilities from another venue
- All participants will be responsible for ensuring that they are not disturbed and confidentiality is maintained for the duration of the hearing
- The Judge will control access to the hearings
- All hearings will be conducted by three panel members
- Virtual clerks appointed by the MHT will support all hearings

- No pre-hearing examinations (PHEs) will take place.

**Important update on Section 2 reports:**

All reports for section 2 MHTs must be submitted to the MHT office at least 24 hours prior to the hearing taking place. Therefore if the hearing is scheduled for 10.15am on 10 April, the reports must be submitted no later than 10am on 9 April. Please allow time for the Mental Health Act Administrator to scan them on and send by secure email.

**Issues with video conferencing:**

- Please ensure you check your connection at least 30 minutes before the hearing starts
- Hearings commencing at 10.30am must be joined at 10am by all participants. If you have a connectivity issue, please email the MHT administration team on [MHTadministration@justice.gov.uk](mailto:MHTadministration@justice.gov.uk) and a member of the team will assist you
- Hearings commencing at 2.15pm must be joined at 1.45pm by all participants. If you have a connectivity issue, please email the MHT administration team on [MHTadministration@justice.gov.uk](mailto:MHTadministration@justice.gov.uk) and a member of the team will assist you
- Please inform Trust IT helpdesk on 0300 1231020 if you continue to have problems so that the team can check the connection
- Please email the MHA team [dmh-tr.mentalhealthactadministration@nhs.net](mailto:dmh-tr.mentalhealthactadministration@nhs.net) if you experience any issues with the process. Please include the name of the patient, the venue you were using and what the issues were.

If you have any queries about this process, please contact the MHA team for advice as soon as possible after receiving confirmation of the date and joining details on [dmh-tr.mentalhealthactadministration@nhs.net](mailto:dmh-tr.mentalhealthactadministration@nhs.net)